

My Son, Your Student, Our Connection

by pyroleigh

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Summary: Ike's a single dad focusing on raising his son alone, unaware that his friend has set him up on a dating site. He meets an intended match and leaves a bad impression, thinking he'll never see her again. He does though, when Zelda turns out to be his son's teacher. Can they get past their rough first meeting? Modern Zike, in progress, now M for a reason.

1. Chapter 1

Zelda sat on her couch in her new apartment in New Pork City in her pajamas, her laptop balanced on her lap as she filled out the questionnaire. Her belongings were still half boxed up from the move but she had made a promise to herself to do this, so dammit she was going to. Finally she reached the end and hit submit, nervously watching the little loading bar as her results were calculated.

If you asked her at any point in high school or college if she would be using a dating sight to find the elusive Mr. Right, she would have laughed in your face. Now though, having just moved to a new city and officially starting her career as an elementary school teacher... her free time to try to meet people was scarce. Gone were the days of bars and drinks, now she wanted someone to date in a serious way. She didn't have time for casual sex, she wanted more than that out of a relationship, always had.

The results loaded to ninety five percent and she set her laptop down, too nervous to see them quite yet. Would she even find someone this way? She shakily got to her feet and moved to the one remaining box for kitchen necessities and opened it, pulling out her plates and silverware. Her laptop chimed an alert and she froze, her heart skipping a beat. It was done, now what? She steeled herself with a deep breath and marched back to the couch and sat. She ignored her hands shaking as she pulled the laptop onto her lap once more, startled to find her top result lived in New Pork City.

"Okay Zelda," she said aloud in her empty apartment, "you can do this." Curiosity filling her, she clicked on the link to her top match and stared in shock at the handsome picture accompanying the name. "Well Ike G.," she mused aloud, "you're definitely hot." She scrolled through his profile, amazed at what she read.

'Hi I'm Ike. I'm a single dad to one son, his mother completely out of the picture. I'm not looking for casual hookups or an open relationship, but someone to spend my days with. It's been years since I've been in a serious relationship and the whole bar scene isn't my thing so if that's what you want, go click on someone else.'

She read over the blurb about half a dozen times, amazed by the blunt honesty. Curious to know more, she clicked on his pictures, seeing very few had been uploaded. One was Ike standing at a grill, his eyes focused on whatever he was cooking, another one showed him standing beside a redheaded man, both of them grinning at the camera in front of some building, and the last was him at the beach, shirtless and somber looking as he stared off into the setting sun.

Zelda stared at the one from the beach for a long moment, wondering how a man that attractive hadn't found someone to help him raise his son.

More nervous than she had been to take her teaching certificate exams, she clicked on the icon indicating she was interested, hoping for the best.

XxX

Roy's phone dinged as he finished his duties for the evening at the radio station, Ike whistling in the back room. He made sure Ike was busy counting down the drawer for the day of ticket sales and t-shirts before he pulled out his phone, a grin coming to his lips as he saw the alert was from the dating app. He tapped it, his eyebrows rising in shock. "Someone's interested..." he mused under his breath.

"Roy," Ike walked in from the back room to the area outside the booth Roy was supposed to be sweeping up and he jumped, guiltily shoving his phone in his pocket, "we need to make sure the new guy knows how to work the booth this time. Remember the last new guy? We had three minutes of radio silence and-"

"Snake was pissed yeah," he said quickly, hating when Ike's eyebrows twitched in suspicion.

"What are you up to man?" Ike asked as he crossed his arms.

"Just texting that chick from the bar last night," he lied smoothly as he wagged his eyebrows. "She sent me something definitely not suitable for work." Ike stared at him for a second before shaking his head and going back to whatever else he had to do before being able to go home. Roy let out a relieved sigh and pulled his phone from his pocket once again.

"Zelda N. huh?" he mumbled as he scrolled through her just made profile. "Well Zelda, I'm not Ike, but he's too chickenshit to do

this on his own." His fingers flew over his screen, tapping out a very Ike-like greeting, before he slid the phone into his pocket and resumed his normal routine at work, a devilish twinge to his smile.

XxX

Zelda was actually enjoying herself just messaging Ike over the app on her phone. He was sweet and funny, and by that point hadn't made any inappropriate remarks to her. She was just beginning to wonder how to broach meeting up for a face to face interaction when she received a message from Ike.

'Do you want to grab a bite with me today?' She bit her lips together to try and hold back her ridiculously happy smile.

'Where and when?' she responded, practically bouncing in her seat with giddiness.

'How about today? There's this awesome place downtown called Sammy's. Not much but definitely chill enough for a first meet kinda thing.' Zelda smiled while she looked up the address.

'Sounds good. What time?'

'Noon is lunch for me, does that work?'

'I'll see you there :)' Zelda sent and leapt to her feet with an excited noise of glee. Immediately she dashed to her closet and dug through her varied assortment of clothing, trying to find what would be best to wear.

XxX

Roy knew it was wrong to set his friend up like that, but he also knew that if it were up to Ike he'd be single forever. The day his fianc  walked away and left him with a crying newborn son had hardened his heart from any other woman. Roy had hated watching Ike turn into a shell of his former self, but a shell he had become, his life centered around the child he was forced to raise by himself.

With every message he sent pretending to be Ike he felt like maybe this was a bad idea, but found himself continuing anyway, fueled by the desire to see his friend happy once more. She was definitely into the idea, the problem was getting Ike to actually meet her.

XxX

"Hey man," Roy's voice pulled Ike from rewiring part of the mixer booth, him jumping a little in shock.

"What's up?"

"Almost lunchtime... You wanna hit up Sammy's?"

"Sure," Ike shrugged and went back to work, feeling Roy's eyes on him. "Something wrong?"

"No it's just... that place can get crowded on a weekday. How about you go and stand in line, I'll finish up the rewire."

"What are you up to? You got a girl coming here you wanna impress or something?" Ike gave his second best friend a suspicious look as he blushed. "There's nobody here guest wise and this isn't the eighties where working at a radio station is awesome."

"Dude just go," Roy pleaded and Ike let out a sigh as he stood up.

"Fine, but don't clock me out until twelve okay?"

"You got it," Roy's beaming smile definitely told Ike he was up to something, but he decided to just drop it and get going.

XxX

The line to get into Sammy's was ridiculously long but there Zelda stood, keeping her eyes on the people just arriving for Ike. She had his glorious dark blue hair memorized by now, a fact she'd definitely keep to herself when she met him. Finally she saw the spiky blue hair appear near the back of the line, a smile creeping up her lips. "Excuse me," she mumbled to the various people she passed as she went back to say hello, nervous energy filling her body.

Finally she stopped before him, smiling at how he was looking around. Was he looking for her? "Ike?" she said his name softly and he looked down at her, a frown creasing his brow.

"Yes?" he responded questioningly.

"It's me, Zelda," she said with a slight waver to her smile.

"Hi? I'm sorry, I don't think I know you," he said and the smile completely vanished from her lips.

"We've been talking regularly on Match?" she coaxed and he shook his head.

"I'm not on any dating sites, you've got the wrong guy," he said and she scowled at him.

"Wow okay," she said, her anger coming through in her tone. "So what? It's just fun for you to pretend to flirt with someone?"

"Easy there," he snapped back, "I don't have any accounts on any dating sites, I don't have time for that."

"Yeah?" she replied dryly and pulled out her phone. She opened the app and held out the screen, watching his expression shift to one of confusion. "You're a damn good actor, but you're not that good. That's you."

"Fucking shit Roy," he groaned and gave her an apologetic half smile. "My buddy must've set that up, he's been on my ass about dating someone recently and-"

"So your friend set this all up?" she asked with her disbelief dripping in her tone.

"Alright, seriously, I don't know what shit you've been told by my jackass friend online but here's the truth," he lowered his face closer to hers, his eyes flashing in annoyance. "I didn't fucking set that up. I'm a single father raising my kid all by myself so I don't have time for dating anyone. My kid is the center of my universe and I haven't dated anyone since his mother left me not only for myself but also because I don't want to get his hopes up. So, with that Zelda I'll say goodbye and tell you to shove your judgmental bullshit up your ass." He turned around and stalked off, leaving Zelda standing there watching him in shock.

XxX

"ROY!" Ike roared his friend's name as he slammed his way back into the radio station. "Where the fuck are you?"

"Chill out man," Roy said, his hands up in surrender. "I was only trying to help I-"

"I should kick your fucking ass," Ike snarled. "You set me up on a dating site?! And then communicated with some chick while posing as me?!" He gripped his friend's shirt in his hands, his glare making Roy flinch.

"Dude I needed to do something you weren't ever going to-" Ike cut him off with a punch right to the lip, his knuckles hurting from the impact. "Fuck man!" Roy's fingers flew to his split lip, blood trickling from the lower one.

"Take the goddamn profile down now," he snarled.

"Okay," Roy nodded and Ike released his shirt.

"Wait," he said, Roy's hand pausing halfway to his pocket. "Message that chick you had me meet and tell her this was some stupid shit idea of yours."

"You got it," he said with a nod and Ike stalked past him, his anger still demanding an outlet.

"Do it fucking now," he growled out as he went into the booth and shut the door.

"What's up man?" Snake, his boss and semi-friend asked around his cigarette he definitely shouldn't be smoking in the booth.

"Play something fucked up and angry," Ike said and Snake raised an eyebrow.

"What the hell happened?"

XxX

Zelda scoffed at the message from Ike's "friend" Roy, not even bothering to respond before cancelling her profile and tossing her phone on her bed in defeat. "So much for that," she said with a sigh as she collapsed next to her phone. "God I was such an idiot! Never again," she vowed, "will I do that. No more dating sites." She picked herself up off the bed and went over to her lessons plan for the

school year starting in a few days, determined to put any and all things Ike related from her mind permanently.

****XXX****

****Yes this is a new idea, I have no shame or self control. The original ideas were separate but then I thought, I love the drama of it put together so... I did just that! This is only chapter one, so have no fear my Zike shippers! They'll meet again (and very soon)! Anyway, let me know what you think. Much love, Leigh****

2. Chapter 2

The first day of school dawned, Ike smiling to himself as his son came out of his room, his dark blue hair disheveled as he sat at their tiny table for breakfast. "Mornin' kiddo," he said as he pressed a kiss into his son's unruly mop. "Ready to go back?"

"Dad, its fifth grade," he said with a sigh, poking at the plate of chocolate chip pancakes mournfully.

"You'll survive," Ike said as he sat across from his son.

"My teacher this year is supposed to be new, the other lady retired." Ike nodded as he watched his son take a bite of the pancakes slowly. "I hope she's okay."

"I'm sure you're going to love her, just like you loved Ms. Toadstool last year."

"Mrs. Mario now," his son corrected quickly, a smile on his lips at the mention of his fourth grade teacher. "She married him on spring break remember?"

"That's right," Ike said with a nod, looking for a way to change the subject before his son started asking questions. "I'll be able to pick you up everyday this year, I worked it out with Snake at the station."

"Cool."

"Alright eat up then comb your hair kiddo, it looks like you've got a bird nest going on up there."

"Thanks Dad," his son's sarcasm made Ike smile.

XxX

"Alright class," Zelda beamed at her new students, hiding her nervousness with an easy smile, "my name's Ms. Nohansen, I'll be your teacher this year. Let's get the roll call out of the way before we jump right in." She went down the list of names, looking up as each student responded, trying to commit the names to faces. "Marth Greil?" she called out.

"Here," a small hand went up in the middle of the room and Zelda stared at the longish mop of blue hair a moment, reminded of her disaster of an attempt at online dating. She smiled at the sweet face of the boy and continued down the list, shrugging off the midnight

blue hair as a coincidence.

XxX

Recess came and Zelda stood by Peach as the children ran around on the colorful playground equipment, her eyes on her various students and their interactions. "You've got Marth this year," Peach said and Zelda looked over at the boy in question, a ways apart from the other kids as he sat in the tiny rocks, his eyes unfocused on the road visible through the chain link fence. "He's a sweet shy boy, always gets top marks."

"Doesn't he have friends?" Zelda asked and the blonde shrugged, placing a hand on her slightly swollen stomach.

"He's not the most sociable, but he has a few. You're going to love Parent-Teacher Conferences though, his daddy is a hottie."

"Peach," Zelda laughed at her newfound friend.

"What? He is," she shrugged. "He went to every single one last year, always by himself, and I loved those one on one talks... It's rare to see a father so involved." Zelda nodded as she watched the young boy wave at a passing car, the black exterior and dark windows keeping the driver from view. A few kids ran over to Marth and Zelda watched him get up and follow them to the swings, a small smile forming on her lips.

XxX

Ike grinned as his son walked to his car after school let out, his backpack slapping his back with each step. "Hey my guy," Ike said when the passenger door opened, "how was school?"

"Pretty good," Marth said with a smile as he sat down, his backpack on his lap. "My new teacher is awesome."

"Good," Ike said with a nod as he pulled away from the curb, listening for the sound of the buckle clicking.

"We're going to read some good books this year and she said she's going to prep us for middle school classes towards the end of the year... She even said that if we're good and keep our grades up we'll get an ice cream party."

"She sounds awesome," Ike said as he joined the rest of the cars leaving the school's half circle drive, the black exterior shining with its just waxed beauty.

"Her name is Ms. Nohansen," his son excitedly prattled on. "She's really pretty and she's funny too. She said she'll start every day with a writing exercise to encourage our imaginations. Today's one was about what we did over the summer. I wrote about hanging out with grandma and going to the beach with you."

"Those were fun days huh?" Ike mused with a smile and watched Marth nod with enthusiasm. "When's the first parent's night? I don't wanna miss those."

"In a couple weeks. She said we're going to draw and paint and do

some fun stuff to show off how awesome we are." Ike chuckled and shook his head.

"She sounds pretty cool man... So you don't miss Ms. Toadstool?"

"Mrs. Mario Dad," Marth corrected as he unzipped his backpack. "And no, besides it looks like Ms. Nohansen won't be wearing pink everyday so that's cool." Ike smirked as his son brought up the one complaint he had with his fourth grade teacher, shaking his head as they traveled down the road to their apartment.

XxX

Zelda sat on her couch, the stack of papers from her students writing assignment in her lap. Most of them talked about sleeping in, some went camping, a girl went to another country with her parents... Zelda rolled her eyes at one boy claiming to have gone to Mars and met Martians. Finally she came to Marth's and she read the perfect little pencil strokes with a small smile.

'I spent my summer with my dad, like I do every day. He took me to Grandma's when he had to work where she gave me lots of cookies and let me run around in her big backyard. When Dad was off he would take me to the beach and we would splash around until he had to cook dinner. He also made me read for an hour every day before bedtime which I hated at first but I read some cool stuff. One night we camped out on our balcony but it started to rain and Dad said we needed to go in so we slept on the floor in the living room. Dad fell asleep first and I watched cartoons.'

She smiled at the writing, loving that her student seemed to think the world of his father. Her mind roamed to what Peach said about him being attractive, silently letting herself admit that she wouldn't mind meeting the father of such an amazing young boy. Whoever he was he was obviously wonderful and she let herself entertain the notion of what he might look like for a moment before she went back to reading.

XxX

"Alright guys," she smiled at the attentive faces before her, "today's writing is about what you would wish for if you could have anything. Think about it... Anything in the world. What would you wish for? A new video game, a pony, a unicorn... nothing is off limits." She looked around, her eyes landing on Marth and his somber expression. "Anything at all. Time starts... now."

XxX

"At least tell me she was hot right?" Ike groaned and looked over at his friend as they tweaked the knobs in the broadcast booth, switching the bass a touch lower.

"That was forever ago man-"

"Come on, she was your type. Thin, pretty, hell she was even a brunette-"

"Shut up Roy," Ike warned and Roy shrugged.

"Just saying," he held up his hands in surrender.

"Yeah she was hot," Ike finally relented, "but I blew my chance with her so we're dropping it."

XxX

Zelda once more sat on her couch, her tv turned low as she read over what her students would wish for. Most wrote about a cat or dog, others wrote about skateboards and endless supplies of candies, but Marth's broke her heart.

'I wish to have a mom. Not my mom, she hasn't been around since I was a baby. I want to see my dad happy and smiling and a mom to wake me up some days. Not that Dad does it bad I just think it would be cool to have a mom. Some kids don't like theirs and I don't see why not. I want that but Dad doesn't talk about stuff like that with me. He said mom left and I am all he needs but I don't believe him. His friend always has girlfriends and I see him stare at them so I know he wants one too. I wish I had a mom who loved me and Dad.'

Zelda set the paper down and wiped at her eyes with her hand, amazed by the young boy. He had a wonderful wish, by far the most beautiful one she'd read. With a heavy sigh she picked up the other papers, her mind not really focusing on the fact that Ness wanted a new yoyo since Lucas broke his.

XxX

Ike set down the plate of spaghetti before his son, a groan leaving his lips as he took his own seat. "Hey Dad?" Marth's questioning voice made him pause in his movement to swirl spaghetti onto his fork.

"What's up?" he asked as he set his fork down, giving his son his undivided attention. He watched Marth take a deep breath and raised an eyebrow, wondering what took so much courage to ask.

"Ness is having a birthday party this weekend," he answered all in a rush.

"Okay?" Ike didn't understand what the big deal was.

"It's a sleepover at his house."

"You wanna go?" he asked and Marth nodded. "You can go kiddo, you know that."

"It's on Saturday night," he said and Ike smirked, suddenly understanding.

"So you wanna skip movie and pizza night with your old man?" he asked with a smirk and Marth rolled his eyes.

"Dad you're only twenty eight come on," he said and Ike smirked.

"If you wanna go Marth I'm not going to be bummed," he said and Marth nodded.

"I'll go if you promise me you'll go out." Now that made Ike's eyebrows shoot up in surprise.

"Say what now?"

"I don't just want you sitting around here," Marth shrugged and twirled his fork in his noodles, "so I'll only go if you promise to go out and have fun. Deal?" Ike searched his son's eyes for a moment before nodding once.

"Alright," he conceded and jabbed his fork into the spaghetti, ignoring his son's triumphant smile.

****XXX****

****Two chapters in one day on the same story?! Inspiration has struck my friends. Thanks to the awesome review leaving badasses last chapter: concisponci, Purple Mercenary, Approaching Dawn, and Qoh22! I'm glad everyone's enjoying it so far! Let me know what you think. Much love, Leigh****

3. Chapter 3

Ike couldn't believe he agreed to this. He had dropped Marth off less than an hour ago and was walking into the bar beside Roy who chattered on excitedly about them finally going out for drinks again. "It's been forever man!" he gushed and Ike shrugged.

"I don't like ditching my kid on my mom, you know that," he said as they moved to the bar.

"Okay, rule one," Roy turned on him, a fire in his eyes that promised trouble for Ike, "no mentioning Marth. Tonight you are a free man with no responsibilities. Rule two," he looked around them and grinned wickedly, "you are so getting laid."

"Roy-"

"Dude come on!" Roy motioned wildly. "It's been how long for you now? You're Ike fucking Greil! You can charm a nun out of her habit and no man should go that long with only his hand for company." Ike shoved him and Roy beamed. "Just try. Use that damn grin that got you laid in high school left and right."

"I'm no good at this shit," Ike grumbled under his breath as the busty bartender walked over to them.

XxX

Zelda could hardly believe that she'd already been a teacher for one week. One week of school and she was shifting through the mountain of work her students had completed, trying to find out exactly which ones showcased each student's strengths for the parent teacher conferences coming up on Monday night.

Once more she sat in her apartment, this time with Peach on the other end doing the same thing. "Does this look like a cat to you?" Peach's question made Zelda look up and laugh at the bright orange drawing with long ears.

"More like a... hybrid of cat and... Dumbo?" she offered and Peach let out a laugh.

"How are we supposed to showcase their work when this is what they do?" she asked while still laughing.

"Well," Zelda kicked out her feet, "I've got some decent things to show-"

"From Marth right?"

"Mostly," Zelda admitted and Peach sighed. "I actually got Ness and Lucas to draw some amazing things the other day... I had to manipulate them but they did."

"What'd you do?" Peach asked and Zelda shrugged.

"Told Ness that Lucas was drawing something awesome and then turned right around and told Lucas that Ness had done something cool."

"You sly devil!" Peach shook her head and sighed. "You ready for your first parent teacher night?"

"Mostly," Zelda said carefully.

"Be wary of the overly involved moms," Peach warned. "No one else will say it but they can get pretty hardcore about their children and it's kinda scary sometimes."

XxX

Ike didn't quite know how this happened, but he wasn't exactly complaining. He was quite a few shots down, his head in a delightful fog, and he currently had some chick on his lap, her intentions very obvious as she rocked slightly. Roy had vanished with someone about thirty minutes ago, leaving Ike to fend for himself amongst the women who had been ogling him. Somehow this bold one had caught his eye and now they were definitely working towards leaving together, Ike wondering if they'd get farther than a car before she pounced.

This wasn't what Ike wanted, he knew that. What he wanted was someone to wake up to, someone to fall asleep holding... he didn't want a quick nameless fuck in a car or behind the bar. As she grabbed his hand and they staggered towards the exit, he realized that was exactly what was about to happen.

XxX

Zelda bid Peach a good night and shut the door behind her, turning to her empty apartment with a weary sigh. Her oh so helpful imagination conjured up an image of someone leaning against her counter, nodding suggestively to the door that led to her bedroom. She'd never admit it out loud, but the person she thought of was Ike, her disaster of a date.

"Dammit Zelda you're pathetic," she groaned as she sat on her couch and picked up her phone, her curiosity getting the best of her. In no time she was on the dating site, typing Ike in the search bar and waiting on the results to load. The results finally loaded and she

was surprised to see him not pop up. Maybe his crazy story about a friend setting it up wasn't a lie? "Stop being stupid," she chastised herself and picked up her tv remote, determined to get farther in the show she had been binge watching since she found it.

XxX

Fucking in a car was harder than Ike remembered. Maybe it was due to the fact that in the past, namely his high school days, he had always been in his car, which had a spacious backseat. Now he was squished in the back of this hipster's hybrid, his pants barely pulled down enough to get himself out of them, with her riding him.

They were in an old warehouse's parking lot, him really hoping that no cops were patrolling. They weren't at it for long, but he counted her screaming out profanities twice before he finished, so he counted that as a win for both of them. She climbed off of him, a groan leaving his lips as she somehow worked back into her skinny jeans. She got her pants zipped up and he knew what was coming before she could open her mouth.

"I'll catch a cab back," he said and she sighed in relief as he opened the door and climbed out into the night.

"Thanks for that!" she called and he nodded as he slammed the door, not wanting anything to get awkward. He checked his phone, a smirk coming to his lips at the text from Roy.

'Dude where'd you go?'

'Rule two' he sent back as he kept walking, his mind on a hot shower to wash away the lingering shame.

XxX

The next morning dawned too early for Ike as he rolled out of bed to get his son. His hangover wasn't bad, but it was enough to annoy the shit out of him as he got dressed and fumbled his feet into his shoes. Halfway out the door and his phone rang, the trill making him cringe. He glanced at his screen, a sigh leaving his lips.

"Hey Mom," he said and heard the telltale signs of her cooking in the background.

"Hi honey, you and Marth will be here for lunch right?"

"Yeah I'm picking him up from a birthday party now."

"What'd you do with a night off?" Elena's tone suggested she had an idea and Ike resisted the urge to hang up.

"Got drinks with Roy. Gotta go Mom, hopping in the car and can't talk on the phone. Love you," he hung up and took the stairs two at a time, definitely not looking forward to the inquisition at lunch.

XxX

Monday dawned too early for Zelda. She set about making her classroom presentable for the incoming parents, wondering how many would

actually show up. As she tacked up the various artwork drawn by her students they filed in, the boys chattering excitedly about the birthday party over the weekend.

"Alright settle down," Zelda smiled at her students as the bell rang. "Take out paper and a pencil and tell me what you did over the weekend." They set about doing just that and Zelda leaned against her desk, watching Marth scribble something down excitedly.

XxX

Zelda sat at her desk for lunch, chewing her sandwich slowly as she read over the writing assignment from the morning. All of the boys talked about the party, even Marth but he mentioned having lunch with his grandma and dad, and how his dad seemed off. Zelda let her mind muse over that as she finished up her sandwich, feeling a little silly for getting so wrapped up in her student's personal life.

XxX

"I'll see you all back here tonight for parent teacher conferences!" Zelda called out as her students filed out, a smile on her lips. Marth was the last out the door and he paused. "You okay Marth?" she asked and he nodded.

"Ms. Nohansen," he turned back around and ran over to her, wrapping his arms around her middle, "you're the best." With that he took off running again, Zelda smiling with fondness as he vanished out the door.

XxX

Ike didn't like going to these things. He really hated them but going meant finding out first hand how his son was doing so he always went. He grabbed a clean shirt from his closet, a t shirt but hey it wasn't the one he sweated up at work so it would have to do. Marth paced nervously by the door, watching as Ike emerged from his room freshly showered and dressed. "You're wearing that shirt?" Marth scrunched up his nose and Ike scoffed, looking down at his plain black shirt curiously.

"What's wrong with this one?"

"Dad I want Ms. Nohansen to get a good impression of you," he groaned and Ike gave him a look.

"I'm not dating your teacher kiddo, get that idea out of your head right now." Marth rolled his eyes and Ike grabbed his keys.

XxX

Ike dropped off his son at Elena's before heading to the school, a scowl on his lips as he parked. He climbed from his car and walked towards the door, ignoring the smiles from the single moms and especially the ones from the women with wedding bands on their fingers. He moved down the fifth grade hallway, giving a nod to some of the fathers there that looked bored out of their minds. He didn't understand how some guys weren't into what their kids were doing but he couldn't judge.

He made it to the door marked with a handmade sign claiming it to be Ms. Nohansen's room and took a calming breath. He peered in the tiny window and saw two parents sitting at the desk, blocking the teacher from view. He nodded and leaned against the wall, checking the time on his phone.

"Hi Ike!" he cringed at the voice of Rosalina, the single mother of Lucas who had been less than subtle in flirting with him in the past.

"Hey Rosalina, how's Lucas?"

"He's great! He's been talking about wanting Marth to come over sometime to play... so I was thinking-"

"Thanks again!" Ike had never been happier to have an excuse out of a conversation in his life as the two parents talking to the teacher left the room. He gave Rosalina an apologetic smile and stepped into the room, his smile falling from his lips at the sight of the woman standing behind the desk.

"Shit," he cursed as she looked up at him, her eyes widening in shock.

****XXX****

****Cliffhanger!** Mostly because my phone panics when a chapter is too long. Special thanks to concisponci, Ender2142, Monkey999Boy, and guest for reviewing last chapter! The alerts make my day you have no idea. As always, let me know what you think! Much love, Leigh**

4. Chapter 4

Zelda had been grossly misinformed about the crazy over involved mothers of her students by Peach, that was the first thing she realized as a mom stormed in and demanded to know why her daughter's artwork wasn't displayed out on the cork board in the hall. After she explained that the third graders had colored those the woman calmed down, only to unleash a torrent about how she should've displayed the fifth grade art in the hall too. Five parents down and Zelda was relieved when a husband and wife walked in calmly, both of them smiling though the father's seemed a bit forced. They talked about their son, how he needed to read more outside of the classroom to get his reading skills past his current level, and they left, the father checking his phone almost the whole time.

She heard the door open again as she stood up, her eyes on her stack of student work who's parents she hadn't seen yet. She glanced up, her smile dropping from her face to see Ike standing there.

"Shit," he cursed and she furrowed her brow. "You're Miss Nohansen?"

"I am," she said with a tight nod, trying to control the urge to tell him to fuck off. "Your child's in my class?"

"Yeah," he nodded once, breaking their eye contact to look at the floor. "Marth Greil," he said as he looked up again, catching her

eyes and holding them. Zelda's eyes widened in shock at that.

"Marth's your son?" she asked the question without thinking it through and he crossed his arms.

"What's that supposed to mean?" his tone was defensive and she bit back a smart retort.

"I'm just surprised," she responded instead, "small world you know?"

"Yeah..." he shifted on his feet nervously and let out an audible sigh, almost deflating as his arms dropped to his side. "Look, my son thinks you're the greatest teacher in the history of teachers so please don't treat him differently because he's my kid alright? I'm sorry I was an ass to you that day-"

"It's fine," she waved off his words quickly and pulled Marth's stack of work from her desk, holding it out to him. "Let's just stay on topic here okay? Marth is doing well, he's actually my best student." Ike's lips twitched into a grin at that and he took the papers from her carefully, looking at the small handwriting with a fond smile. "I make them write every morning and he seems to think the world of you... you're in every entry." She watched Ike thumb through the papers, his brow twitching as he pulled one out. Zelda repressed the urge to groan because she knew exactly which one he was reading as his grin faded completely. "Is that the wish one?" she asked pointlessly and he nodded silently.

"He wants a mom," Ike's voice was barely audible and Zelda stilled her hand from reaching out to him in comfort. "Shit," he looked away, his eyes glistening at what he read, "he's always smarter than I think."

"He knows you very well," Zelda said and Ike snorted.

"It's been just me and him for ten years," Ike finally looked back at her, sadness in his eyes. "I've been doing my best I swear I-"

"Ike," this time Zelda let her hand rest on his arm, her eyes not leaving his, "he thinks you're the best dad ever, don't doubt for a second how much that boy loves you." He blinked slowly, obviously trying to compose himself. "And despite doing it all on your own he's incredibly well adjusted and..." she trailed off as he looked at her hand on his arm and she immediately withdrew it. "Come look at his grades in the computer," she nodded to her desk and together they walked over, him stopping with a foot of space between them. Zelda clicked her way to Marth and scrolled through the grades slowly, looking at Ike out of the corner of her eye. He was beaming with pride at the high A's, the smile on his lips nothing short of beautiful to Zelda. He leaned closer to the screen, by proxy getting much closer to the slightly nervous teacher sitting in her chair.

"My kiddo's got high A's in everything," he looked about two seconds away from breaking out into a song and dance number and Zelda nodded.

"Do you help him with his homework?" she asked and he licked his lips, her watching the movement intently.

"He usually doesn't ask," he admitted as he finally looked away from the screen. He searched her eyes for a moment, a silence stretching between them that almost felt comfortable. "Thank you," he breathed the words and Zelda tilted her head in confusion. "For showing me that. I sometimes don't think I'm getting any of this parenting crap right." His cheeks reddened slightly as he looked away and Zelda smiled warmly at him.

"Well you've definitely done something right," she said and he gave her a grin, something she wasn't sure she could name making her heart skip a beat. He looked from her eyes, his own going to what Zelda assumed was her lips and she cleared her throat before standing up abruptly. "I understand that you're quite busy with work but there's a bake sale coming up to raise money for a field trip I want to take the class on."

"Where?" Ike asked curiously.

"The planetarium," she responded and he smirked.

"That'd be awesome. What do you need? Cookies or something?"

"Actually," Zelda blushed and he quirked up an eyebrow, "I need help with managing the kids and selling the baked goods."

"You want me to wrangle kids and sell cookies?" he asked.

"Yes," she said and he stared at her for a moment, making Zelda really wish she could read minds.

"When and where?" His response surprised her and she smiled happily, her heart beating faster at the thought of spending more time with him.

"Next weekend at the fair," she said and he shook his head.

"I'll have to talk to my boss but... maybe."

"Okay," Zelda tried not to be disappointed by the possibility of him not being there and leaned over her desk to grab a pen. "Can you call me when you find out so I know who I can count on?"

"Ouch," he winced at that and she groaned.

"Not that that would make you-"

"What's your number?" he asked with a grin, his eyes dancing with mischief. Zelda boldly grabbed his hand and scribbled her number on his palm, not missing his sharp intake of breath at her touch.

"Let me know," she said with a smile that could only be described as flirty. Ike nodded and turned to leave, Zelda happily watching him until the door shut and blocked him from view.

XxX

Ike couldn't help the smile on his lips as he drove to his mom's house to pick up his son. His son's teacher was that Zelda, the one he'd been an ass to... and now he had her number on his hand. Not a scrap of paper, not on his phone, but a classic on-the-palm flirty way to give someone a number. He hadn't felt... this in a long time. He was almost scared to examine the feeling spreading from his core and making him warm all over. The last time he'd felt like this had led to him becoming a single parent.

Pushing all negative thoughts to the back of his mind he parked his car in Elena's driveway and pulled out his phone. With slightly shaking hands he put the number in his phone and tried to type up a message.

'Hey, this is Ike text if you need anything' sounded too much like he wanted to text her. 'This is my number- Ike' seemed too formal... He groaned and shoved ten years of built up self doubt aside and decided that sending 'Hey this is Ike. Here's my number' wasn't so bad. He hit send and climbed from his car up to the front door, a spring in his step.

XxX

Marth was ten, almost eleven. He knew there was plenty he didn't know, a lot about being an adult that he didn't want to know, but he knew one thing for sure. As his dad walked into the living room of his grandma's house, he was different. He was smiling at nothing, walking differently, and when he watched his grandma hug him, his father practically scooped her from the floor. "Hi to you too honey," his grandma laughed as Ike walked over to Marth on the couch, ruffling his hair before he sat next to him.

"How'd the conference go?" Marth asked, not wanting to get his hopes up.

"Well," Ike wrapped an arm around Marth's shoulders and pulled him close, "I found out from your teacher that you are the best damn student she has." Marth beamed at the news.

"She said that?" he asked in awe and Ike nodded.

"You're one helluva kiddo, which I already knew but it was nice to hear from your teacher."

"What'd you think of her?" Marth asked carefully, knowing his dad usually avoided talking about anything lady related for fear of him probing.

"That she deserves you talking about her nonstop," Ike grinned and lowered his lips to Marth's ear to whisper, "and that she's beautiful." That put a smile on Marth's face a mile wide.

"I told you," he said triumphantly and Ike kissed the top of his head.

"If Snake can spare me next weekend I'm going to help out at the fair."

"Why?" Elena asked curiously as she sat on the other side of Marth.

"They've got a field trip she's trying to raise money for them to go on," Ike shrugged like it was no big deal but Marth knew better. He had the most supportive dad in the world, but he had never once volunteered to do anything extracurricular. Marth knew what made him change his mind, knew that it had something to do with the number written on his dad's palm, and he couldn't help but smile at the thought of his dad and Miss Nohansen. It was a long shot, he'd watched his father turn away more women than he could count, but the change in his dad's mood gave him hope.

XxX

Ike couldn't help but laugh at his son as he crawled into the top bunk, the desk beneath littered with papers. "You're getting too big for this bed," he commented and was rewarded with a glare. "Hey man you're hitting that age... you don't wanna be copping your first feel in a bunk bed."

"Speaking from experience there Dad?" Marth's quick retort made Ike laugh.

"Nope, but it would kill the mood. We'll get you a full sized bed soon and-"

"I like my bunk bed Dad and besides that I'm ten. Girls are still girls," he made a face and Ike couldn't help but chuckle.

"I felt that way once," he admitted. "Then it all changed..."

"Dad we already had this talk let's not go over it again," Marth's begging tone made Ike shake his head. "I'm glad you met Miss Nohansen tonight, she's awesome huh?"

"Yeah she's not too bad," Ike commented casually. His son gave him a look that screamed he knew she was more than 'not too bad'. "Get some sleep kiddo you've got school in the morning."

"You got it Dad. Don't be up too late," he said and Ike rolled his eyes.

"I'm the adult here," he pointed out and Marth shrugged.

"Everyone needs sleep."

"Love you buddy," Ike said as he pulled the covers up to his son's chin, missing the nights where he got a kiss.

"Love you too Dad," he watched Marth's eyes already begin to droop and left the room, pulling out his phone as he shut the door. A new text from Zelda made his eyebrow twitch up in surprise.

'I have a huge headache from all the parents!'

'That much fun huh?' he sent as he walked into the living room and plopped onto the couch.

'You have no idea how crazy some of those mothers are.'

'Considering I end up talking to half of them at some point, I kinda

do.' He eased himself into a more comfortable position, kicking one leg up across the couch.

'Yeah but you aren't the reason their kid isn't getting high enough grades in their minds. I'm pretty much the wicked witch from the west or something.' He chuckled at that and fought off the urge to send something saying he personally found her more attractive than the witch.

'Welcome to teaching. Population: people crazy enough to do it.' He watched the dots dance on his screen as she typed a response, wondering what she'd say.

'Crazy huh? Alright what do you do?'

'I work at the rock station here in town. I'm not a dj, I just do all the technical crap and whatever else my boss demands.'

'That sounds fun.'

'It has its moments... Usually when there's a guest musician in for an interview I get to chat them up.'

'I'd have tons of autographs if I were you.'

'Nah, that's unprofessional. I do have a few, but my boss would fire me in a heartbeat if he knew I did.'

'Blackmail!!' He laughed at that, his mind trying to figure out if this was flirting or not.

'I'm not exactly swimming in cash so be kind with what you want for payment for your silence.'

XxX

Zelda could think of a few things she'd definitely want for payment for her silence from Ike, none of which she wanted to tell him right then. She had no idea if he was being flirty or if her mind was just twisting it that way. 'I'll think about it...' she finally sent and collapsed on her bed, kicking her shoes off her feet belatedly.

'Thought you fell asleep on me there for a minute.' His text made her smile as she pulled off her shirt and tossed it to the floor.

'Tempted to, I'm exhausted from the long day.'

'Poor baby'

'Be nice! Remember I have blackmail :P' she sent and rolled her eyes at herself.

'I bet I could dig up some on you.' His text made her blush, wondering what he would consider blackmail worthy.

'I'm squeaky clean, nice try.'

'I highly doubt that.' He fired the message back quickly and Zelda

couldn't help but smile, ignoring the voice in the back of her head that told her texting a student's father was probably very unethical.

'Any plans this evening?' she sent with a shake of her head.

'Changing the subject huh? I knew it. As for your question... Not really. Marth's asleep so I'll probably just sit here and watch tv. You?'

'I'll probably fall asleep soon... Ha no that doesn't make me sound lame.'

'Not at all. It really was a long day for you, and on a Monday too. You've got brains to shape in the morning so go to bed.' Zelda smiled at the text, amazed that he was caring enough to send that. Instead of telling him that though she sent another message.

'You can't boss me around'

'I think I just did :P' he sent back and she laughed as she eased herself down on her pillows.

'Fine. But! Only because I want to.'

'Riiiiight. Well on that note goodnight Zelda. Ttyl?'

'Text me anytime' she sent and smiled to herself as she snuggled up under the blankets on her bed, not even caring that she was going to bed half dressed. Her phone buzzed and she looked at the screen, her smile growing at the simple response he'd typed.

'Likewise'

****XXX****

****I really tried to have this out last night, but I dozed off mid word and ended up with a string of bizarre words that came from my phone's autocorrect... Does your phone ever suggest things like fuckbeans? My phone does. That probably says more about me than I think. Anyway special shout out and thanks to my reviewers last chapter: concisponci (which my phone still suggests every time I hit c), Qoh22, Approaching Dawn (who reviewed two chapters!), and BlueEri13. The reviews keep me fueled to keep going, it sounds dumb but it's true. Anyway let me know what you think. Much love, Leigh****

5. Chapter 5

Marth had a new mission. As he sat in his desk waiting for Ms. Nohansen to start class he deliberated on various ways to make his father sound even better in his morning writing assignments. He wasn't an idiot, he was only ten but when his dad went to shower he checked his phone and saw the strings of texts from his teacher the night before. His dad rarely texted anyone that wasn't one of his buddies. Him texting a woman that wasn't his grandma or aunt was huge.

"Morning guys!" He whipped his head up to see Miss Nohansen leaning against her desk, a brighter than usual smile on her face. "The good news about last night was that almost all of your parents got good reports... those of you that didn't well, you have only yourselves to blame. Pull out a pencil and paper and listen up because here's the prompt for this morning. What will you do to help yourself? Will you make yourself read more? Will you study harder? Think about it and write it out, you've got," she glanced at the clock on the wall, "five minutes. Go."

Marth picked up his superhero printed pencil and started, already knowing what he was going to say.

'I'm doing okay in school so I want to help my dad out more at home. He does everything when he gets off of work and sometimes I hear him cleaning way after my bedtime. I want to help him with cleaning more and maybe help him realize it's okay to have a girlfriend because he doesn't have to worry about me getting my hopes up. I know that he gets lonely sometimes and that's not fair to him. He's funny and smarter than all his friends. If he wants to date someone he should without stopping and thinking of me. I want me to not be an obstacle in his happiness and-"

"Times up!" she called out and Marth sighed, realizing he spent too much time trying to figure out if he spelled obstacle right. "Pass up your papers and pull out your history books." He passed his paper to Ness in front of him, his eyes flicking over the classroom thoughtfully.

XxX

"Hey Boss Man," Ike said as he sat across from Snake in his office, the man quickly stashing the cigarette he was about to light.

"What's up Greil?" Snake tried to play it cool and Ike just gave him a look. "I wasn't going to smoke that in here-"

"Bullshit," Ike said and watched Snake narrow his eyes. "I'll keep it to myself if you give me the weekend off."

"Why would I do that?" he asked as he leaned back in his chair.

"Because you're the best boss in the world and I have to help out at my kid's fundraiser for the school."

"Thought you didn't do that shit," Snake remarked and Ike shrugged.

"What's wrong with changing my mind?" he asked and Snake narrowed his eyes.

"Why are you really doing it?"

"Because I'm an awesome dad?" Ike meant to say it like a statement but it came out a question. "Look,

just this one weekend. I'll be at the fair at the school's booth if

you just can't live without me."

"Alright," Snake nodded once, "on one condition."

"Name it," Ike said with a grin.

"You tell me her name."

"Who's name?" Ike asked as his grin fell.

"Who's the chick you're asking for time off for?"

"I'm not seeing a chick Snake I'm-"

"Yeah and she's going to be there right? So tell me her name or no deal." Ike stared at his boss, almost not believing that he had to do this.

"Zelda Nohansen, she's Marth's teacher."

"Teacher?" Snake laughed at that. "You can't date his teacher you know that right?"

"I know," Ike said with a heavy exhale, "but he won't be a fifth grader forever and..."

"And?" Snake probed carefully.

"And she seems to maybe be interested in the idea."

"Are you blind Greil?" Snake asked incredulously. "There's a lot of women out there who would be interested in the idea, plenty of which are not your boy's teacher."

"The fact that I have Marth to take care of knocks a lot of women off that list," Ike pointed out and Snake gave him a look.

"There's plenty more that wouldn't care about you having him," he insisted and Ike shrugged.

"I haven't met these mythical women but if you see one please point her out to me," with that he stood up and Snake shook his head.

XxX

Payday was Marth's favorite day of the week. His dad got paid on Tuesday and they'd go out to dinner, wherever he picked. He loved going to the big chain restaurant Bowser's Big Plates, a bad name but great food with a relaxed atmosphere. He'd order his usual burger and fries with an endless refill of soda, while his dad would get a plate of spicy steak fajitas and a beer. They'd sit and laugh about various things, his dad always ignoring the flirty waitresses. It was the best night of the week and the second he hopped in the car he turned to ask if they could go there that evening.

"If you finish up all your homework," was the immediate response he always got, and his dad stayed true to form, Marth saying it along with him.

"How was class buddy?" his dad asked as they pulled away from the curb, Marth already pulling out his math worksheet.

"It was great! Miss Nohansen was happier today than usual and she let us play on the playground for an extra fifteen minutes." He didn't miss the smirk on his dad's lips as he mentioned his teacher, a smile coming to his own. "We didn't get assigned too much homework tonight so I know whatever made her happy definitely is a good thing." He was teetering on the edge of manipulation at this point, but he'd already dropped hints around his teacher that he and his dad ate at Bowser's Big Plates on Tuesdays so he figured go big or go home and continued. "She has a pretty smile when she's happy."

"Yeah I bet," his dad said casually and Marth smirked as he began his homework. He'd count that as a win in his book.

XxX

Trying out a restaurant wasn't weird, Zelda reminded herself as she walked up to the doors of Bowser's Big Plates that evening. She was doing something completely normal as a relatively new person to a big city. The fact that she had overheard Marth telling his friends Ness and Lucas about it just meant she was an attentive teacher. And yes, maybe she had overheard him say that they always go there Tuesday nights but... okay maybe it was a little bit more than her trying out a new restaurant.

She walked in the door and the smell of good greasy food hit her nose, the chatter of the patrons surprisingly relaxing as she was led to a table. She followed the hostess as she took in the colorful walls and knick knacks pegged to it, a smile crawling up her lips.

"Miss Nohansen!" Marth's voice pulled her from her reverie and she felt two arms wrap around her middle, a smile coming to her lips.

"Hey Marth!" she returned the hug and looked to see Ike sitting in the booth, his eyebrow quirked up in surprise, a grin on those lips she would deny having imagined against hers. The hostess paused politely and Ike opened his mouth, cut off immediately by Marth.

"You wanna join us? It's just me and my dad come on!" He grabbed her hand and Zelda blushed as she was practically forced down beside Ike who just gave her an embarrassed smirk.

"Were you meeting someone?" he asked carefully and she shook her head.

"Just grabbing a bite," she admitted. "Do you mind?"

"Not at all," he turned to the hostess and gave her a grin that made Zelda wonder how he was still single. "She'll sit with us," he said and the hostess nodded with reddened cheeks as she set Zelda's menu before her.

"Thanks," Zelda said as she picked up the menu and looked over at Marth on the bench all by himself, a smile on his lips as he sipped on a soda. "I've never eaten here before, what's good?"

"The spicy steak fajitas are amazing," Ike remarked as he picked up a frothing mug of beer.

"I always get the bacon cheeseburger," Marth chimed in and Zelda smiled at him fondly, letting herself admit that he was her favorite student.

"I end up with less fries every time," Ike said with a fake pout and Zelda laughed.

"He's growing up Ike, you're just going to have to get used to it." He gave her a mournful look for that and she gently patted his arm, quickly withdrawing her hand before it became awkward. She knew, in the back of her mind, that it was bizarre. There she was, sitting at a table with a disaster of an attempt at online dating, and she was being a little flirty with him. She should still be mad at him, but she found herself drawn to him. He gave her a grin before turning his eyes back to his beaming son, the two of them sharing a silent conversation across the booth.

"What made you want to try this place?" Ike asked casually as he flicked his eyes back to her and Zelda suddenly felt like she knew what the silent conversation was about.

"Well I saw it a few days ago but never stopped in," she said, happy to see a waitress approaching. "I heard from a highly reputable source that they have good food here and decided to try it."

"What can I get you to drink?" the brunette waitress asked the second she was at their table and Zelda glanced at the drink list, worrying her lower lip between her teeth for a moment before deciding.

"I'll try the blackberry margarita," she said boldly and the waitress beamed.

"It's so good you're going to love it," she declared and Zelda smiled. "Let me put this in at the bar and then I'll be right back to get your order." With that she walked off and Zelda glanced out of the corner of her eye to see Ike not even paying attention to the sway of the woman's hips as she did so. An understanding smile came to her lips at that, her realizing that he wasn't a typical guy once more.

"Marth and I come here pretty much every Tuesday," Ike said as he swiped the thin white paper wrapper of Marth's straw and began rolling it between his fingers. "I get paid on Tuesdays and this is where he usually wants to go."

"I can see why," Zelda smiled as she looked around the restaurant, trying to reign in her internal panic that he was onto her. "I might have to make this place a regular thing for me too."

"You should come on Tuesdays with us!" Marth chimed in and Zelda looked at him, the confident way he sat there with his bright smile made a smile slink up her lips.

"Isn't it a little weird to have your teacher at your table?" she asked and he gave her a look that screamed that was a dumb question.

"You're not just a teacher and I'm good in class," he said instead, "so I've got nothing to worry about. It's not like you have a bad report to give my dad."

"He's got you there," Ike said with a smirk. Zelda let herself imagine for a brief moment this becoming her regular Tuesday night, the three of them sitting together and talking about things, laughing as they ate their food, and she decided that she could in fact get very used to the idea.

"I wouldn't want to intrude on your night out," she finally said.

"You're not," Marth insisted and she smiled with a glance at Ike who looked almost like he agreed.

"Maybe," she finally said and Ike glanced at her, their eyes meeting. His eyes searched hers for a moment and she really hoped that whatever he was looking for he found.

"One blackberry margarita!" the waitress's arrival made Zelda jump and look away from Ike with a blush. "So what do you want to order?"

"The bacon cheeseburger!" Marth was beaming as he ordered and Zelda smiled with a quick glance down at her menu.

"The grilled chicken quesadillas," she said after a moment.

"Spicy steak fajitas," Ike declared and held out his menu for the waitress to take. He turned his eyes to Zelda's, a conspiratorial gleam in his. "You're trying a bite of mine, they are so good." The waitress collected their menus and walked off as Zelda picked up her drink and took a sip. The tang of the alcohol was almost completely masked by the blackberry flavor and she forced herself to remember to sip her drink.

"Hey Miss Nohansen," Marth spoke up and she turned her attention to him, "why'd you want to become a teacher?"

"Well," she began to explain, realizing she had Ike's attention as he propped his elbows on the edge of the table and leaned his chin against his clasped fingers, "I was originally going to college for a business degree and I wasn't happy doing it. One day I was studying for a midterm and it hit me that I shouldn't be doing something for a career that didn't make me happy. The next time it came to sign up for classes I changed my major and here I am."

"I'm glad you did," Marth said with a heartbreakingly sweet smile and she couldn't help but smile back.

"Me too."

****XXX****

****Thanks for reading and a special thanks to Qoh22, Approaching Dawn, and concisponci for reviewing last chapter! You guys are awesome. Lemme know what you think! Much love, Leigh****

End
file.